

Reports unpublished mss.

by William W. Turner

IN COLD BLOOD AT DEALY PLAZA

By the time his limosine had fled the openness of Dealey Plaza and disappeared into the maw of the Triple Underpass, President John F. Kennedy was effectively dead and Lyndon B. Johnson was the new chief executive of the United States. As has been made clear by the vivisection of the Warren Report by its critics and by the investigation of New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, Johnson was not an accidental president propelled to power by a lone Marxist malcontent. His succession was illegitimate, the product of a coldy calculated, professionally executed ambush of Kennedy.

While there is no solid evidence that Johnson and his staff were involved before the fact, the evidence is incontrovertible that elements of the United States government engaged in a studied conspiracy to cover up what actually happened that bleak day at that forelorn spot.

The coverup started practically as soon as the echos of gunfire died. Some dozen men were arrested in the Dealey Plaza area by Dallas police and deputy sheriffs. Records exist on three—Larry Florer, Jim Braden and Charles Givens—who were interrogated and released as uninvolved. *There are no records* (Decker Exhibit No. 5323). There are no official records of the arrests of the other nine. *Only photographs of several. But there are photographs of several*

The photographs are among the many snapped by the Halck Star agency's alert James Murray after the shooting. One picture shows three men being marched from the direction of the Depository Building by two Dallas police officers *with* totting shotguns; Jim Garrison has tentatively identified two of the suspects. Another picture shows two men, one a Negro, the other a Latin, being led into a police car; *The Negro is probably Charles Givens, the Latin, Garrison's investigation indicates, he was a member of a paramilitary group that had trained in Florida.*

While the secrecy surrounding the anonymous nine is hardly reassuring, *material* the ~~alter~~ alteration of eyewitness testimony is shocking. The FBI has classified

*Enclosure in
letter of June 13, 1965
from Bill Turner to
S. Jaffe in
Paris.*

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the original statements of ninety eyewitnesses as Phase Four, the meaning of which is known only to the Bureau and the effect of which is that the statements are not available for inspection by outside eyes. Two persons whose names appear on the Phase Four list have recently been interviewed by Jim Garrison. One, Julia Ann Mercer, contends that the affidavit published in the Warren Report volumes as her own is a forgery. ~~James Earl Ray, pp. 483-484~~ The other, former Deputy Sheriff Roger D. Craig, claims that the published version of his testimony before an assistant counsel of the Warren Commission has been tampered with at fourteen points.

In a recent statement to Garrison, the comely Miss Mercer recounts that she was driving west on Elm Street past the Depository Building at about 11:00 a.m. on the morning of the assassination. She was forced to stop by a pickup truck blocking her traffic lane. The truck was in front of the Grassy Knoll with its two right wheels up on the curb. "I was delayed by traffic congestion long enough to observe a man remove from the back of the truck a rifle wrapped in paper," she says. She also saw the driver quite clearly: "While I was stopped there he looked at me twice."

The next morning, November 23, Miss Mercer was shown an assortment of photographs by the FBI. "One of the men I picked out was Jack Ruby," she recalls. "When one of the FBI agents turned the pictures over I saw Ruby's name on the back." She also selected three other photographs as "of the same type with regard to facial features." The next morning, Sunday, she was watching television when Ruby shot Oswald. "That's the man I saw in the truck!" she exclaimed to her family. Miss Mercer is positive of her identification. "From the view the television screen gave of Ruby—especially when they showed it again slowly—I recognized him as the man who was at the wheel of the truck on Friday and as the man whose picture the FBI showed me on Saturday."

Julia Ann Mercer was ignored by the Warren Commission. She had volunteered her information about the pickup truck to the sheriff's office on the afternoon of the assassination, and what purports to be her affidavit is published as Decker Exhibit No. 5323, pps. 483-484. It quotes her as saying that "I could not

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see [the driver] too clearly," and (falsely represents that she saw a sign "Air Conditioning" on the door (the FBI went through the motions of canvassing air conditioning firms in the Dallas area in quest of the truck). She claims that her signature on the document is a forgery ("I have always used a pointed capital 'A' and whoever signed my name on those two pages used a round capital 'A' each time"), and that the notarization by a Rosemary Allen never took place in her presence ("On no occasion during any of my questioning was a woman present").

The FBI report of Miss Mercer's interview November 23 reposes in the National Archives. It does not mention the showing of Ruby's picture to her, and in fact insinuates that she would be unable to identify the driver. But she insists that the FBI "showed me Jack Ruby and I definitely picked him out as looking like the driver." The FBI interviewed Miss Mercer again on November 25, the day after Ruby shot Oswald. ^{This report} states that she was shown Ruby's photograph at that time but "could not identify him as the person [at the wheel of the truck]." However, it does repeat the "Air Conditioning" sign fabrication. Miss Mercer ~~undoubtedly~~ is adamant that she did not see any lettering on the truck door. "Now wouldn't it be silly to put black letters on a dark green background?" she reasons with unassailable logic.

Now the wife of a business executive in a city distant from Dallas, Miss Mercer is resentful of and frightened by the falsification of her testimony. If her charges are true—and there is no evident motive for her to make false ones—local and/or federal authorities went to desperate lengths to conceal that they knew of a relationship between Oswald and Ruby and that Ruby had delivered a man with a ⁹ rifle to the assassination site. In this light, the belated revelation by a Dallas policeman that he had seen the truck and determined that it had engine trouble in itself becomes suspect.

The Commission's rendition of the testimony of Roger Craig appears in Volume 6, pps. 260-273. The most crucial part of his account concerns his observation of a station wagon, probably a Rambler, some fifteen minutes after the assassination. While interviewing witnesses in Dealey Plaza, he heard ² a whistle and looked up to see a young man running down the lawn between the Depository Building and Elm Street. Craig said he wanted to question the young man, who got into the station wagon, "but the traffic was so heavy I couldn't get across the street" (The incident was also noticed by a passing motorist, Marvin C. Robinson,

who disclosed that the station wagon "suddenly appeared before him," and then stopped for the passenger [GD 5].)

Later on, when he heard a suspect was in custody, Craig went to the office of Captain Will Fritz in police headquarters to take a look at him. He says he recognized Oswald as the young man who had gotten into the station wagon. When Fritz told the suspect that an officer had seen him entering a car at Dealey Plaza, Oswald jumped up and railed in a loud voice, "That station wagon belongs to Mrs. Paine. Don't try to tie her into this. She had nothing to do with it." Then, as if realizing that he had trapped himself by divulging that he knew the car was a station wagon, Oswald sat down and resignedly announced, "Now everybody will know who I am."

(Mrs. Paine is undoubtedly Ruth Paine, in whose suburban Irving home Marina Oswald was staying and in whose garage the bulk of Oswald's belongings were found, including sophisticated optical and camera equipment. Mrs. Paine did have a Rambler station wagon; Craig says that sheriff's deputies who searched the Paine premises at mid-afternoon on the 22nd noticed it parked in the driveway.)

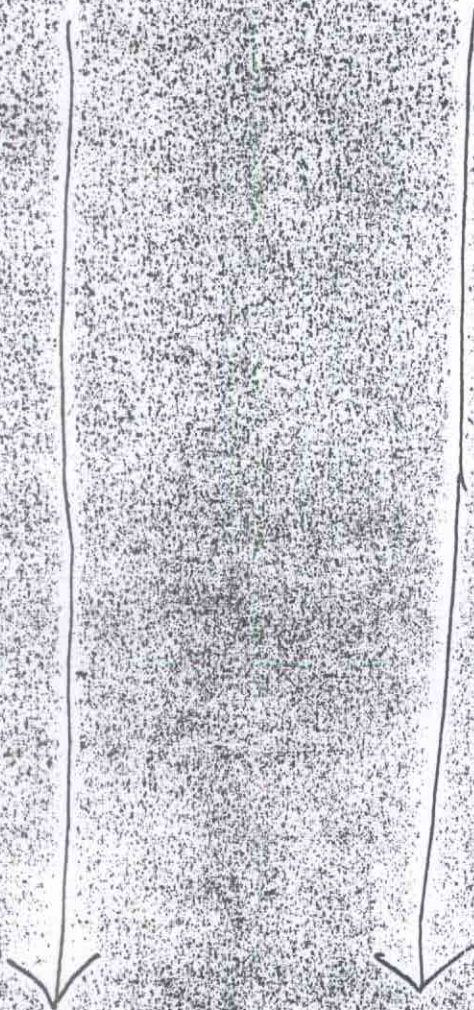
Craig alleges that Sheriff Bill Decker subsequently instructed him not to discuss the station wagon incident with anyone. "You did not see Oswald," he quotes his quondam boss. In spite of the warning, Craig included the incident in his lengthy testimony before Assistant Counsel David W. Belin of the Commission. Of Belin Craig comments, "He acted like the quicker he got it over with the better." Following Craig's testimony, Captain Fritz supplied the Commission with an affidavit asserting that he did not know the deputy sheriff and did not "remember anything about Lee Harvey Oswald jumping up or making any remarks or gestures to this man or to me at this time..." (Vol. 7, p. 404). "He knows me," Craig retorts.

As for the driver of the station wagon, Craig says that he described him as a "swarthy man, possibly a Cuban." The version published by the Commission has the deputy saying, "He struck me as a Negro." The distinction is vital, since Garrison's investigation has implicated anti-Castro Cubans.

Certainly one of the most resourceful officers in Dealey Plaza that day, Craig went up to the sixth floor of the Depository Building after eyewitness Arnold Rowland reported that two men had appeared at the sixth floor window shortly before the shooting (Rowland later failed to identify Oswald as one

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of the man). Other officers were converging on the sixth floor. Crig heard one of them yell, "Here's the shells." He went over to the southeast window and saw the shells on the floor. "They were all very close—suspiciously close," he recalls. "Two of the shells were touching, the other was ~~xxxx~~ a quarter inch from them." As any rifleman knows, the chances are practically nil that the random bounces of ejected shells would array them in such near-perfect order.



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Photo 3 → When a picture of Edgar Eugene Bradley, charged last December by Garrison with conspiracy in the assassination, was flashed on television, Craig claims he recognized him as a man with whom he conversed briefly on the steps of the Depository Building within minutes of the shooting. (Bradley alibis ^{that} he was in El Paso, Texas at the time of the shooting). According to Craig, Bradley "repented himself as a Secret Service man" as he mingled with Dallas police officers but "showed no interest whatsoever" when Craig attempted to pass on to "the Secret Serviceman" information ~~about the shooting~~ that had already come to his attention. "I have always had that face in mind," Craig declares. "Everything that happened that day is a picture in my mind. I can remember his smooth complexion and cleft in the chin. I can remember every word said that day."

Craig's testimony is, to ~~thx~~ say the least, ^Sstartling. Is he a singularly courageous law officer reporting exactly what he experienced, or a man prone to illusions and exaggeration? Now a ruggedly handsome 31 and the father of two children, Craig ran away from home at age 12 to make his way in the world. At seventeen, he enlisted in the Army and served with distinction in the Korean War. In 1959 he pestered Sheriff Decker for a deputy's commission, and became the youngest deputy on the staff. In 1960, the sheriff's department honored him as its Man of the Year, an award based on his capture of a badly wanted ~~criminal~~ fugitive. Significantly,

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he was driving home from work and ~~was spotted~~ spotted the fugitive, riding in another car, from a photograph he had seen of the wanted man. Craig had quite a reputation among his colleagues for recognizing faces.

Shortly after testifying before the Warren Commission, Craig ~~was~~ summarily was fired by Decker--no specific charges were cited. ~~For a while~~ Last October he voluntarily went to New Orleans to convey his information to Garrison. Upon his return to Dallas, he realized he was being "tailed." A few days later, as he stepped out of a restaurant, he was shot at. "The shot---it sounded like a pistol---came from behind me and went over my left ear," he said. "I could feel the wind." Then he was fired from his job with a bailbondsman, ~~who~~ Although the Warren Commission ~~found Craig's testimony to be~~ asserted it "could not accept important elements of Craig's testimony," it appears that others find ^{them all} ~~it~~ too acceptable.

A majority of the spectators and law enforcement officers in Dealey Plaza thought that ~~one or more~~ ^{of the} shots which ~~came from the general direction of the Grassy Knoll and Triple Underpass, i.e. from a direction to the right and front of the Presidential limosine.~~ ^{called President Kennedy} ~~Last December~~ ^(New Orleans District Attorney James) Garrison raised the possibility that a shot ~~might~~ ^{cylinder} might have been fired from a pillbox-like underground ~~structure~~ ^{cylinder} that has an aperture in the curbing on the north side of Elm Street at the approximate point where the steps on the Grassy Knoll meet the street. This ~~structure~~ ^{cylinder} is part of the storm drain system that underlies Dealey Plaza; the aperture permits water to flow into the system. Entry can be made through a three-foot square grating directly behind the picket fence on the Knoll.

Photo 4

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~~xxxxxxx~~ a pipe fifteen inches in diameter runs from there to the "pillbox."

Although Garrison carefully explained that ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ he was not flatly stating that shot came from this source but merely pointing out that it was one more possibility overlooked by the Warren Commission, those segments of the media which printed the theory afforded it ill-disguised ~~xxxxxxxx~~ derision. However, it is not so wild. Los Angeles photographer Stephen Jaffe, who has been assisting the DA, has taken photographs from inside which reveal a surprising field of vision. The explosive head shot recorded at Frame 313 on the Zapruder film took place about 90 feet east of the "pillbox;" Jaffe has calculated that a gunman ~~in the pillbox~~ inside would have had ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Kennedy in full view for ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ almost two seconds by Frame 313.

The accounts rendered by Secret Service agents riding in the motorcade, whose ears are attuned to the sounds of gunfire, strengthen the "pillbox" theory. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ In a report prepared only hours after the assassination, Clinton J. Hill wrote that after hearing the initial shot, he heard a second shot that had ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ "a different sound---like the sound of shooting a revolver into something hard" (CE 1024). Afterwards, before the Commission, he elaborated that the second shot seemed to come from the "right, but I cannot say for sure that it was rear... [It] had almost a double sound---as though you were standing against something metal and firing into it, and you have both the sound of the gun going off and the sound of the cartridge hitting the metal plate...it seemed to have some type of echo" (Vol. 2, p. 144).

Photos
5 & 6

Agent Roy Kellerman described a "flurry"—"I am going to say two, and it was like a double bang" (Vol. 2, p. 76). George Hickey also perceived the double phenomenon: "I heard two reports which I thought were shots and that appeared to me completely different in sound than the first report and were in such rapid succession that there seemed to be practically no time element between them" (CE 1024).

The three Secret Service agents were vividly describing the type of double-thud characteristic of a shot fired in a semi-closed container.

At precisely 12:40 p.m. by the Hertz clock atop the Depository Building, photographer Murray took a picture of a plainclothes officer picking up an object from the grass on Dealey Plaza. The object, ⁹ located about two feet from the curb on the south side of ~~the~~ Elm Street close to where the President received his massive head wound, ~~is the shape and size of a .45 caliber bullet or a bullet of similarly large caliber. The tag line on the photograph disseminated by United Press-International infers that the officer is searching for "a bullet believed to have lodged in the earth." A subsequent photograph shows the officer walking away from the scene with his hand clenched as if holding a small object. The UPI photograph was not widely published in the press; the Dallas Times-Herald, for example, ran it in its first editions the evening of the assassination but pulled it from later editions. The unnamed officer has now been identified as FBI agent Kyle G. Clark. Neither his name nor the incident appears in the Warren Report or its 26 volumes. If he did in fact recover a bullet of a different caliber than the 6.5 caliber load for the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle alleged to have been fired by Oswald, the existence of a conspiracy was established ten minutes after the assassination.~~

As Garrison puts it, "Many men in many places were glancing at their watches at noon on November 22, 1963." It is now evident that some of those men were in Washington, and that they had put in motion the coverup even before the moribund President reached Parkland Hospital.

Photo
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